

Lincoln. July 1, 24.

Devotional Meeting Topic for July 16
Special Helps for To-morrow's Meeting

THE

Patriotic Number

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Lincoln, the Advocate of Abstinence

WHEN Abraham Lincoln was a boy nine years old, he promised his dying mother that he would never touch strong drink.

A few years later he wrote an essay on "The Evils of Strong Drink," which he read at the country school, and the teacher was so impressed with its merit that she insisted on his sending it to the county paper for publication.

As he grew to manhood he became a radical and eloquent advocate of total abstinence. In that early day when drinking was well-nigh the universal practice, when the whisky barrel was on tap at every cross-roads grocery, when the whisky jug was passed around at the sheep-washings, barn-raising, and in the harvest field, Lincoln was regarded as peculiar because of his strong stand for abstinence.

In his early manhood he joined the Sons of Temperance and later was one of the leading spirits in the Washingtonian movement.

At Springfield, Ill., on February 22, 1842, he delivered a temperance address that has become a classic in Prohibition literature. Though for many years continuously a candidate for public office, he was outspoken upon the temperance question, when such a stand in that day was extremely unpopular.

When a committee waited on him to notify him of his nomination for the Presidency, he so far ignored long-standing custom as to serve his guests with water instead of wine, saying: "Gentlemen, I invite you to drink with me to the welfare of the nation in the best drink ever brewed for man, 'Adam's ale.'"

The facts about Lincoln as a temperance man were for half a century lost sight of. Then by a fortunate accident in the year 1902, they came to light.

Dr. Howard H. Russell, founder of the Anti-Saloon League, when passing through Illinois, met an aged and prosperous farmer, who told him this remarkable story:

"It was in the summer of 1846," said Mr. Breckenridge, "that my father, Preston Breckenridge, arranged for a temperance meeting at the South Fork school house in Sangamon County, and invited a young lawyer of Springfield, who had gained quite a reputation as a temperance speaker, to deliver an address.

"The whole community turned out. It was a warm afternoon, and instead of assembling in the schoolhouse, the people arranged themselves on logs and boughs outside, left over when the house was built.

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From colored drawing by Arthur J. Keller.

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"Now, sonny, you keep that pledge and it will be the best act of your life!"

6. Which message is needed more to-day, that of God's justice or of his love?

7. One of the condemnations of Hosea was that "Ephraim" did not stand out and out for righteousness "he hath mixed himself among the people. Ephraim is a cake not turned." Apply this to to-day.

If You Have a Song Service

Use the Methodist Sunday School Hymnal.

Sing:

"When Wilt Thou Save the People?"

No. 380.

"Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life." No. 233.

"O, Master, Let Me Walk with Thee." No. 236.

"O Love that Wilt not Let Me Go." No. 189.

"O Beautiful for Spacious Skies." No. 279.

Illustrating the Topic

"I have shifted my viewpoint from service for Ego to service for God and humanity. To live for self alone is to commit suicide. I wanted to become a Christian."—*Haachiro Yuasa*, THE EPWORTH HERALD, June 4, 1921.

"The God of Jesus was the Great Father who lets his light shine on the just and unjust and offers forgiveness and love to all. Jesus lived in the spiritual atmosphere of that faith. Consequently he saw men from that point of view. They were to him children of that God. Even the lowliest was high. The light that shone on him from the fact of God shed a splendor on the prosaic ranks of men. In this way religion enriches and illuminates social feeling."—*Rauschenbuseh*.

"He who to-day feels humanity's need and appreciates the crisis in which the world is gripped will not rashly push to one side the ideals and powers that he revealed who, by his life and words has already rewrought civilizations as has no man or teaching."—*Shailer Mathews*.

"In humble imitation of her Saviour she seemed wherever she went in all her relations, to be the very embodiment of love and good will to men; and never to have thought of herself, of her own ease, advantage or convenience."—*Life of Mary Lyon-Gilchrist*.

"Love of country is not enough. We must learn to love all men."—*Edith Cavell*.

that he who is highest must be the servant of all; if to a low one, if to what seems a mean and monotonous task, remember that your work is of value in the eyes of God, who judges better than the world judges."

Lincoln the Advocate of Abstinence (Continued from cover page)

The speaker came on horseback.

"After making a very earnest appeal for total abstinence, he drew from his pocket a paper, saying: 'Friends, I have written and signed a pledge, and I would be pleased to have all my neighbors who are willing, sign it with me.'

"After many had signed, the speaker asked me if I would like to have my name on the pledge, and on receiving an affirmative answer, he wrote my name for me, (a ten-year-old boy could seldom write his name in those days), and then transferring pencil and paper to the left hand, placed his right lovingly upon my head, saying as he did so: 'Now, sonny, you keep that pledge and it will be the best act of your life.'

Then said Mr. Breckenridge: "Dr. Russell, the man who that day wrote my name on the pledge, and placed his hand in blessing on my head, was Abraham Lincoln. I have faithfully kept the pledge."

Said he, "Years later I kept a tavern in Colorado, about fifty miles east of Denver, and the people advised me to get a barrel of whisky, mix it with river water, sell it and make some money, but I said: 'No, I don't drink it and I won't sell it,' and mine was the only temperance tavern I ever heard of on the old trail across the plains.

"I served in the Civil War and all the soldiers in my company drank, except one other man and myself, and I did not, because I had taken Lincoln's pledge."

So Lincoln's words proved to be prophetic. It was the best act of Cleopas Breckenridge's life when he signed that pledge, for to-day instead of filling a drunkard's grave and bearing a dishonored name, as is true of many of his boyhood companions, his memory is held in highest esteem for his sterling Christian character.

Again, in 1903, Dr. Russell visited Mr. Breckenridge at his comfortable country home, and at his suggestion went to Edinburg, Ill., to interview Moses Martin and R. E. Berry. To his great delight he found that both these old men had been present at this South Fork schoolhouse meeting, and corroborated all that Mr. Breckenridge had related.

Moreover, to his astonishment, the aged Mr. Martin recited to him as glibly as a schoolboy the identical pledge which Lincoln had presented on that occasion. He declared that following that particular meeting, he acted as secretary of other meetings, and memorized the pledge so he could recite it to the people. So the pledge, written, signed and advocated by Abraham Lincoln, brought down to us on the tablets of Moses Martin's memory, is to-day the pledge of the Lincoln-Lee Legion.

"I See by 'The Epworth Herald'"

Topic for July 2—"That These Dead Shall not Have Died in Vain"—Gettysburg Address

The Epworth League is a great training school through its social service study classes, its Institutes, its devotional meetings for the training of good citizens.

It is necessary that we shall strive toward worthy ideals to try to order our lives in harmony with the law of service, if we are to do our part in making possible a Christian order.

Is Our Task Finished?

A writer in *The Christian* says: "A little while ago, I was asking a company of boys, of ages ranging from eleven to fifteen, if they were glad or sorry that they had been born a few years too late to take an active part in the Great War. Several answered that they were 'sorry,' and I think they really meant it. They felt that big things had been done on those fields of France, and they wished, with fervent hearts, that they could have had a hand in the great enterprise. So they have felt themselves out of it, cheated, disappointed, and have listened with envy to the great story of the exploits of their elder brothers.

"How thrilling and wonderful it must have been: how I wish I had been there!—has that been the thought of some of you? It is a fine thought. But I want to tell you that it is a great mistake to think that all big things have been done these last years, and that nothing remains for you to do. On the contrary, the bigger things remain to be done. The world has been broken, and smashed, and terribly wounded, and your great task is to help build it up again. It is a much finer thing to build up than to destroy. The destruction could not be avoided, because there was

a flaw in the heart of things. Just as the doctor sometimes must seem very cruel, when he has to perform a surgical operation with his knives and his lancets, so our soldiers had some stern and harsh work to do. The world has had to go through a surgical operation, and now it is weak and sick and fevered before us. The time for the sword has passed; the time for healing has come. Men and women who are brave and kind, patient and skillful, are badly needed. All over the world there is a call for them, and men are looking especially to you, the coming generation. What are you going to do about it, boys and girls? What can you do? As yet, perhaps, no special call comes to you. These are your days of preparation, and God requires of you that you live them in a spirit of courage—keen about your lessons, keen about your play; practicing the unselfish life; pure and sincere in thought and work and deed; kind and sympathetic in your dealings with others; determined and persistent in face of difficulties. Above all, by prayer and the reading of the Word you must get into touch with the mind of God.

"Then, one day, the clear call will come to you, to take your place in the ranks of the world's helpers—perhaps as a missionary, to sound the message of Christ in the ears that have never heard it; perhaps as a minister, to proclaim the good tidings of God's love, in your own country; perhaps as a man of business or a merchant, to purify and uplift the great sphere of commerce; perhaps as a doctor, to lessen suffering, and help people to lead stronger, healthier lives. Perhaps to high places, perhaps to obscure places, you will be called. If it is to a high one, remember